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LETTER DATED 18 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I wish to transmit herewith a cable message addressed to the Security Council from His Excellency Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Minister of External Relations, concerning the Eritrean military aggression against the Sudanese territories on the country's eastern borders.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elfatih ERWA
Permanent Representative

98-07343 (E) 200398 200398

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Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 18 March 1998 from the Minister of External Relations of the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to our previous letters to the Security Council regarding the repeated and consecutive Eritrean acts of aggression against the Sudanese territories, I regret to inform you and other distinguished members of the Security Council that Eritrean aggression and violations of the territories of the Sudan and Sudanese civilian targets are continuing. The stable Sudanese villages located on the border with Eritrea have become military battlefields and targets for the Eritrean attacks, which have caused serious human and material losses.

I should like to convey to this august body some details of the recent Eritrean aggression against the Sudanese territories during February and March, as follows:

1. On 26 February 1998, the Sudanese troops at Al-Garada, Shellalob, Al-Lafa, Abu-Qamal and Al-Gargaf were subjected to heavy Eritrean artillery shelling from within the Eritrean territories for a continuous period of five hours, from 5.30 to 10.30 a.m.; this shelling has caused vast human losses and destruction of civilian property. The shelling was preceded by a massive offensive supported by tanks and armed vehicles against the Al-Gargaf region where a small Sudanese force was stationed. The attack resulted in the occupation of the region and the killing of a number of our troops; others were wounded. Our troops recaptured the region in a counter-offensive after 72 hours.

2. On 1 March 1998 at 1230 hours, the Al-Lafa camp was subjected to intensive shelling by 122-mm rocket launchers from within the Eritrean territories. As a result of this shelling, a number of civilians were wounded by fragments of the rocket launchers.

3. On the same day, 1 March, at 8.30 a.m., an Eritrean military contingent seized a tanker vehicle at the Wad Sherifi camp in the Gunfer region belonging to the refugee commission, after killing the driver at the scene of the incident in the Sharaf Abu Agla region.

4. On 4 March at 6 a.m., the Eritrean forces continued shelling from within the Eritrean borders for a period of three hours at the villages of Awad and Galasa, causing destruction of the water tanker and a school building. The shelling of these villages resumed at 1230 hours, including shelling at the village of Hafarat for 10 minutes. This shelling was launched by 120-mm mortars, 122-mm howitzers and 122-mm rocket launchers.

The Sudan has observed and continues to observe the highest possible degree of self-restraint, paying due consideration to the maintenance of regional peace and security, but self-restraint has its limits. If Eritrean aggression

continues, the Government of the Sudan reserves its full legitimate right to defend its own territories and citizens.

In bringing to your attention the details of these attacks, the Government of the Sudan requests the Security Council to draw the attention of the Eritrean regime to the need to abide by Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and to refrain from its acts of aggression, which will lead to the destabilization of regional peace and security.

In conclusion, I request that the content of this letter be circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of External Relations

H.E. Mr. Abdoulie Momodou Sallah
President of the Security Council
Permanent Representative of Gambia
to the United Nations